

*House & Senate Members Still Seeking Final Passage of Legislation to Block Privatization Efforts Across the Country*

*Washington, DC* - In response to repeated pressure from Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), Congressman John Hall (D-NY), U.S. Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) and U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), the Army today announced it is formally cancelling its efforts to privatize 531 public works and custodial jobs at West Point and will instead maintain them as government positions. The Army's announcement comes as House and Senate defense leaders continue to debate whether to approve a provision that Hinchey helped author with Hall's support that would prevent the Pentagon from moving forward with its plan to potentially privatize nearly 6,000 civilian and military jobs, including the jobs at West Point. While the jobs at West Point are now safe from the flawed A-76 process, thousands of others government jobs remain at risk. Schumer and Gillibrand have been working to include the House provision in the final bill.

Hinchey, with the assistance of Hall, helped push the provision through the House as part of the fiscal year 2010 Defense Appropriations bill, but the Senate did not include similar language in its version of the bill. Schumer and Gillibrand are now trying to have the Senate adopt the House language. House and Senate defense spending leaders, including Hinchey, are now working to resolve the differences between the two bills. Hinchey said he is hopeful that the Army's cancellation of its privatization efforts at West Point, will boost support for the provision he helped to sponsor in the House defense bill that would cancel privatization efforts at all other military installations across the country.

"Today commonsense won out over ideological stubbornness as the Army abandoned the senseless study that had been initiated by the Bush administration in an attempt to privatize hundreds of government jobs at West Point," said Hinchey. "More than 500 workers at West Point, who have done their jobs well for years, now have the comfort of knowing their jobs won't be outsourced to a private company in Georgia that would have cut their wages and benefits while padding the salaries of company executives. The entire A-76 process is broken and misguided and should be eliminated. I'm thankful for Army Secretary McHugh's leadership on this matter and I encourage him and other Pentagon officials to cancel the remaining A-76 studies, which have been proven to be inherently unfair and remain a threat to thousands of workers across the country. I'm hopeful that this latest development at West Point will strengthen our efforts in Congress to have the Senate support the language I secured in the House Defense Appropriations bill that would cancel these privatization efforts across the country."

"Keeping these jobs both local and in the government is the right decision for West Point, the Army, our community, and the taxpayers," said Hall, whose Congressional District includes West Point. "Allowing the A76 study to go forward would have outsourced West Point's jobs and cost taxpayers more money. The A76 study that led to the privatization of West Point jobs was inherently flawed, skewed, and discriminatory since its inception. Privatization reviews were commissioned by the Bush administration as part of an ideological effort to outsource government jobs to private companies. I am glad we have finally done away with this illegal holdover from the Bush Administration."

"This is the final nail in the coffin of this deeply flawed study," said Schumer. "The A-76 process was obviously unsound and relying on its inaccurate data made no sense at all. During a time when we need to maintain as many jobs as possible, cancelling this study will preserve nearly 400 jobs at West Point and save taxpayers money."

"This is great news for West Point and the Hudson Valley," said Gillibrand. "My top priority is keeping New York jobs and rebuilding our economy. Ending this flawed study is the right decision and will ensure these New Yorkers will continue to have the job they deserve and need."

In March, the Pentagon announced its decision to privatize 394 operations and maintenance jobs at West Point that have long been held by government employees. The Department of Defense revealed it was planning to outsource West Point government jobs to a private company from Georgia. The 394 workers at West Point subsequently appealed the Defense Department's decision to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), which last month ruled in the workers favor; citing flaws in the cost comparison analysis that would have led to a waste of taxpayer dollars. Specifically, GAO found that the Pentagon used unrealistic figures provided by the private sector when determining whether it was cost-effective to outsource the government jobs at West Point.

The Pentagon also sought to privatize an additional 137 custodial jobs at West Point. That plan was previously rejected as part of the A-76 process, but was not formally resolved until today. With the Army's announcement today, the 531 jobs at West Point that were once threatened to be privatized are now safe.

While the provision Hinchey and Hall successfully helped push through the House will no longer be needed at West Point, the measure would prevent all other privatization efforts, known as Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-76 privatization reviews, from being carried out. Those privatization reviews were started during the Bush administration. Prior to today's announcement, a Pentagon document showed that 3,575 civilian jobs and 2,394 military jobs were in jeopardy of being privatized. The provision Hinchey helped draft would prevent that from happening. The congressman also secured the inclusion of an additional provision in the House version that would block the privatization of more than 20 positions that manage the water and wastewater utilities at West Point. Those jobs remain in jeopardy regardless of the Army's new intentions, but they would be saved under the legislation Hinchey helped sponsor with Hall's assistance.

Earlier this year, Congress passed legislation that President Obama subsequently signed into law that bars any future privatization studies. Since the West Point study and others were already underway, government jobs at the academy and elsewhere were still eligible to be privatized. Hinchey worked closely with House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense Chairman John Murtha (D-PA) to ensure the inclusion of the provision blocking the privatization of government jobs.